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PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHLZ  
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DE RUEHAH #1069 2310839  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 180839Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1359  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4165  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1977  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1842  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2413  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2786

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 001069

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, PPD

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TX](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MFA ISSUES DECIDEDLY NEUTRAL PRESS  
STATEMENT ON SOUTH OSSETIA

REF: ASHGABAT 1062

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (U) In the August 16 edition of the official Neytralniy Turkmenistan newspaper, the MFA issued a press statement on South Ossetia:

Begin unofficial translation:

Turkmenistan expresses its deep concerns and sympathy about tragic events in South Ossetia that resulted in a great number of victims among the civilian population. In connection with this, the Government of Turkmenistan expresses its condolences to the family and friends of the deceased. Turkmenistan supports international efforts for creating the atmosphere for a dialogue with the goals of preventing a reoccurrence of military conflict and resolving humanitarian issues related to the consequences of this tragedy. Turkmenistan believes that the resolution of the conflict should be implemented only by peaceful, diplomatic means and methods, which in turn would provide stability and security in the region.

End unofficial translation.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: In line with Turkmenistan's policy of "positive neutrality," the government issued a decidedly neutral press statement. Since many Turkmen watch Russian news, people are aware of the events in Georgia, and it has become a topic of conversation (septel). Through this statement, Turkmen officials can register their concern without taking sides, passing judgment, or getting involved. The Turkmen want to balance their relations with all partners. You will notice that the words "Russia" and "Georgia" do not appear anywhere in the statement.  
CURRAN